

## ACTIVITY PLAN 38 – BATTING A BALL

### Aim

To develop the ability to strike a ball

### Age

3–5 years

### Equipment

String or wool, balloons and a soft bat made from rolled up newspaper taped together or a length of pool noodle or the inside cardboard tube of paper towel or cling wrap

### Area required

Outdoor space of suitable size

### Time

10 minutes



### How?

Suspend a line of string or wool from one stable post (or fixture) to another. Make sure that the line is well above the height of the children to ensure safety.

Blow up several balloons and tie a piece of string to the end of each balloon. Hang the balloons along the suspended line of string. Make sure they hang so they are at each child's waist level.

Ensure that there is enough space between each balloon for each child to swing and hit the balloon safely without hitting any other children.

Before commencing the activity, explain what striking a ball is. Demonstrate and practise these steps with the children.

Ask the children to take a side-on stance and shift their weight from the front foot to the back foot and back again.

Repeat the first step but ask the children to pretend they have a bat in their hands (the instructor may wish to use rolled up newspaper when demonstrating).

Make the swing through action by counting aloud “one”, “and”, “two”. The “one” is the back swing; the “and” is the pause at the top; and the “two” is the swing through when the child's weight has been transferred onto the front foot.

Ask the children to practise striking at the balloons with rolled up newspaper or pool noodles for bats.

## Easier

- Children can use their hand as the bat and attempt to hit the suspended balloon.

## Harder

- Hang up several stockings (with small or medium-sized soft balls squeezed into the ends of them) from a stable tree, rafters or other stable fixture. Make sure there is enough room for each child to swing and hit the ball safely and not hit any other children. Ask the children to practise batting a ball.
- Introduce children to a t-ball stand and bat. Initially, use a medium-sized soft ball to strike and ensure there is plenty of room to safely swing the t-ball bat.

## Key points

- Check that the dominant hand is above the non-dominant hand when holding the bat.
- Check the children have a side-on stance and that they shift their weight from the front foot to the back foot.
- Practise the striking rhythm by saying aloud “one and two”.

Skills involved in striking a stationary ball:

- The dominant hand grips the bat above the non-dominant hand
- The non-preferred side of the body faces the imaginary bowler with feet parallel
- The hips and shoulders rotate during the swing of the bat
- Transfer the body weight to the front foot
- Swing the bat and hit the ball.